

Nation, Narration and Translation: the Construction of an Australian Literary Archive in Italian

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Historically, the institution of the archive has been acknowledged as one which administers the ‘preservation and care of unique records of action taken by a group, government agency, organization, or company’ (Ridener 1). Archivists have traditionally concentrated on the practical aspects of preserving these records for future researchers, but new formulations of the nature and purpose of the archive from outside the discipline, such as Derrida’s *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (1996), which inspired this conference, suggest new paradigms which draw on wider cultural discourses in order to redefine the archive. The role of appraisal is an emerging trend in archival research, offering a socio-cultural perspective into the processes surrounding the construction of, for example, the national literary archive. Such a strategy permits a more comprehensive understanding of the real dynamics underlying literary production and offers empirical support for the claim that ‘Literature ... is produced and managed as a cultural formation by a range of institutions and their affiliate figures – publishers, editors, reviewers, academic critics – who are paid to think about it’ (Davis 7). In the following pages I take this framework offshore as I discuss the socio-cultural agencies in the Italian field of cultural production – e.g., publishers, translators, academics and institutions – which enable the introduction of narratives from the Australian archive into their own but which also constrain this process.¹

One of the functions of fictional narratives is to help individuals to articulate their world but although these narratives may appear to be ‘natural’ they are clearly the result of processes which are not as spontaneous as they might seem. Narratives are culturally specific; they ‘generate meanings, take on significance and assume forms that are *articulations* of the values, beliefs – the ideology – of the culture’ (Turner 1). As such, they become the ‘model by which a society conceives of itself, the discourses in and through which it articulates the world’ (Culler 189). The relationship between language, nation and literature is undeniably complex. Benedict Anderson argues convincingly for the notion that the constitution of the community of ‘fellow-readers’ – as the embryonic formation of the nationally imagined community – was the result of the synchronous development of new common or ‘print-languages’ as cultural markers of difference *par excellence*, and the formation of a national consciousness (44). The emergence of languages of power from the old vernaculars and the new writings which were produced by the spread of ‘print-capitalism,’ to use Anderson’s terminology, contributed to the establishment of a national tradition supported by the book, intimately connected – through language – with ‘place’ as defined by national borders. From the late eighteenth century, Herder’s notion of *Volkgeist*

which linked politics with literature became the cornerstone of literary nationalism, while the construction of literary archives – in the form of prose, poetry and drama – that accompanied the rise of the various nation-states came to be seen as representative of a series of characteristics that were specific to those nations.

Hence national literary archives can be understood as consisting of texts that are the ideological product of specific historical-cultural circumstances signifying at the superficial level of *parole* and at the deeper ideological level of *langue*; they are the product of the social frameworks from which they emerge and in which they make meaning. They should be understood as a reflection of cultural-specific values and discourses, appraised, sanctioned and protected by national bodies such as literary institutions and academies whose responsibility it is to ensure that the national literature circulates internally, predominantly through schools, with the effect that what is originally an artificial construction becomes an accepted reality and encourages production of narratives consistent with previous authorised discourses. But what dynamics come into play when a text is transplanted from the socio-cultural framework in which it originates and translated into another language and culture?

Until the cultural turn in translation studies in the last decades of the twentieth century, the majority of research in the field focused on textual analysis. It is only since the late 1990s that there has been a shift in focus from text to agency with the emergence of a new branch of the discipline that has become known as the sociology of translation. Based primarily on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural production – or its extension into 'field theory' – this is an approach which enables researchers in translation studies to account for the extra-textual constraints on translation imposed by external agencies or 'text producers, mediators who modify the text such as those who produce abstracts, editors, revisers and translators, commissioners and publishers' (Milton and Bandia 1). One of the advantages of such a framework is that it reveals the Janus-like nature of the translated product as cultural artefact and as commodity. As the former, translated texts are conforming to the receiving culture's expectations of Otherness as mediated by its own various socio-cultural agencies. As the latter, they may also be studied as facts that are somehow representative of a form of capital – either economic or symbolic – which gives them access to the receiving culture.

Identifying what constitutes an archive of translated Australian texts in Italy confronts a number of difficulties, not least of which is the inherently subjective nature of what to include. The research on which this essay is based investigated novel-length texts of Australian prose fiction published in Italian translation between 1945 and 2006: it is an indicative but by no means definitive account of what might constitute an archive of translated Australian texts in Italy (Formica 2010). Establishing parameters for such a study implies defining what is meant by a 'literary' narrative as opposed to 'genre' fiction; offering suitable criteria for the definition of an 'Australian' author; as well as establishing a period in which sufficient metatextual data is available to ensure satisfactory outcomes for the project. Of course, time is another factor that further constrains what can and what cannot be attempted.

The initial objective of the research considered the translation of contemporary Australian literary fiction into Italian between 1945 and 2006, a period in which information regarding translated titles became more readily available. Defining a writer as 'Australian' is a complex

issue and for the purposes of the study I have referred to the criteria adopted by Arnold et al in *The Bibliography of Australian Literature* (Vol 2, x). Included in my data are those writers born in Australia and who lived here for all or a considerable part of their lives; writers born in Australia who have lived all their lives overseas but spent their formative years here (e.g. Shirley Hazzard); writers born overseas but who moved to Australia and are now regarded as Australian (e.g. Elizabeth Jolley, Judah Waten and Bryce Courtenay); writers not regarded as Australian but who spent time here and produced work/s of creative literature reflecting their experiences such as Nevil Shute.

The focus was on literary narratives which I argued represented various forms of author ideology defined by the manner in which the writers engaged with contemporary issues such as Australian identity and a sense of national belonging. As an initial working definition of this type of narrative I adopted Gelder's notion of literature as the 'Other' of popular fiction:

Literature is creative; [...] Literature can claim genius [...]. Literature is written to be read carefully, even studied [...]. Literature [...] maintains a rhetorical distance from the world of commerce and the commodity form. [...] Literature is serious, contemplative, unique, "universal." (114)

Ultimately this definition proved unsatisfactory because of its failure to acknowledge that, as outlined previously, texts are both cultural artefacts and commodities and, so to Gelder's list of attributes I added yet another, i.e. that a 'literary' text denotes a narrative that may be read on a number of levels. Such a definition afforded the opportunity to utilise the current 'middlebrow' notion of the book as one which while positioning current literary production within the global book market also allows for a closer reading to locate a culture's representations of itself (Carter 2004). Including popular fiction titles such as the narratives of Morris West and Colleen McCullough alongside best selling literary authors such as Peter Carey, Tim Winton and David Malouf allowed a more comprehensive insight into how and why texts are selected for translation.

Translated titles from genres such as sci-fi (Greg Egan and Matthew Reilly) and 'chick-lit' (Kathy Lette and Linda Jaivin) were included because they provided examples of discernible strategies among Italian publishers. Titles translated from other genres such as crime fiction were too few to support a similar claim, it being argued that their translation is often attributable to contemporary global book industry practices which see many foreign titles published simply as catalogue fillers. Romance novels, children's and adolescent fiction were excluded from the study because they failed to satisfy the above criteria and merit separate analysis because of the volume of works translated and their specific characteristics.

Some omissions were inevitable because this essay is a condensed version of the original research and some one-off translations were excluded from my discussion for reasons of space; e.g. Ruth Park's *The Witch's Thorn* (1951 translated in 1955) and Arthur Gask's *The Night of the Storm* (1937 translated in 1947). Other exclusions however resulted from often-incomplete data because although publishers must provide details to the National Library about Australian publications they are not required to provide information about foreign translations of Australian books. For example, the Italian translation of Elliot Perlman's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (2003)

appears in the AustLit database. However, there is no mention of his earlier novel *Three Dollars* (1998) which was translated in Italy in 2007. Furthermore, at the time the initial research was carried out interrogation by language was not a feature either of the AustLit database or the National Library of Australia Catalogue (NLA). Searching for a specific author or title would allow the language function to be activated but this provided little real assistance for the researcher conducting a language-based search of publications. Various internet book sites such as Internet Bookshop Italia (IBS) and Hoepli also provided some information but often serendipity played a considerable role in identifying a relevant text. Thus discovering the works of lesser-known authors and one-off titles proved to be an impossible task given the time constraints imposed on the project.

The Australian (not solely literary) archive of prose fiction in Italian translation which I constructed consists of some one hundred and forty-five titles and its most striking features are its heterogeneity and apparent inconsistencies. In the following account I begin by drawing a broad outline of the texts which constitute it, working decade by decade between 1945 and 2006: this is followed by a closer examination of the trends in each decade from a field theory perspective.

In the first postwar decade (1945-1955) James Aldridge was the most translated author; Nevil Shute also figured prominently. D'Arcy Niland's *Shiralee* was translated but although Niland went on to enjoy a solid literary reputation in Australia, this title is the only one of his that appears in Italian translation. During the following decade (1956-1965), Morris West's *The Shoes of the Fisherman* (1963) was translated (1964), the first step towards his becoming the modern Australian author most frequently translated into Italian. Patrick White's *Voss* (1957) was likewise translated in 1965.

The decade 1966-1975 shows seven Australian titles were published in Italy, four less than in the period 1945-1955. Morris West was by far the most popular, with *The Devil's Advocate* (1959), *The Tower of Babel* (1968) and *The Salamander* (1973) being translated. Sumner Locke Elliott's *Careful, He Might Hear You* (1963), which in that same year won Australia's most prestigious literary prize, the Miles Franklin Award, also appeared in translation in 1966. While he produced some ten novels in his writing career including *Edens Lost* (1969) and *Water under the Bridge* (1977), Locke Elliott was never again translated into Italian.

Although popular narratives continued to dominate translated Australian titles in the decade 1976-1985, three of Patrick White's titles – *The Solid Mandala* (1966), *The Eye of the Storm* (1973), and *Riders in the Chariot* (1961) – were all translated during this time. Morris West's success continued with five of his earlier works such as *Kundu* (1956) and *McCreary Moves In* (1958) being translated in this period, along with other titles such as *The Navigators* (1976) and *Clowns of God* (1981). Two other outstanding best-sellers by Australian writers translated in this period were Colleen McCullough's *Thorn Birds* (1977) and Thomas Keneally's *Schindler's Ark* (1982). McCullough's initial success has ensured that a total of twelve titles are now available in Italian translation. Keneally had been awarded the Miles Franklin prize on two previous occasions, for *Bring Larks and Heroes* in 1967 and for *Three Cheers for the Paraclete* in 1968, but neither of these has been translated into Italian. *Schindler's Ark* was, however, the 1982

Booker Prize winner; since then Keneally's later works, e.g. *Woman of the Inner Sea* (1993) and *A River Town* (1995), have consistently been translated into Italian.

In the decade 1986-1995, a total of twenty-five Australian fiction titles appeared in Italian translation, of which twelve could be considered literary titles and the remaining thirteen popular novels. Among the latter, Morris West was again prominent, as were Nevil Shute and Colleen McCullough. Bryce Courtenay was translated for the first and only time with *Power of One* (1989), while some of the new genre fictions that were being published in Australia in this period such as Greg Egan's *Quarantine* (1992) also made their way into the Italian market.

The overall number of translations – literary and genre fiction – grew exponentially to reach a total of eighty-one in the final decade of my analysis, 1996-2005. Titles I consider literary translated in this period amounted to thirty-one, less than half the total for the decade. The authors translated represent what would generally be recognised as the elite of the contemporary Australian literary world: Peter Carey with the following titles, *Bliss* (1981), *Jack Maggs* (1997), *True History of the Kelly Gang* (2000) and *My Life as a Fake* (2003); David Malouf with *An Imaginary Life* (1978), *Fly Away Peter* (1982), *The Great World* (1990) and *Remembering Babylon* (1993). Tim Winton appears five times in Italian translation in this decade: *That Eye, the Sky* (1986), *In the Winter Dark* (1988), *Cloudstreet* (1991), *The Riders* (1994) and *Dirt Music* (2001). Three of Dorothy Porter's titles also appear: *Akhenaten* (1992), *The Monkey's Mask* (1994) and *What a Piece of Work* (1999). Richard Flanagan features too with *Death of a River Guide* (1994) and *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001). Other well-known names are Helen Garner with *Monkey Grip* (1977), Robert Dessaix, *Night Letters* (1996), Kate Grenville, *Lilian's Story* (1985), Murray Bail, *Eucalyptus* (1998) and Shirley Hazzard, *The Great Fire* (2003). For the first time Italian translations include the work of Australian indigenous writers: Sally Morgan with *My Place* (1988), Doris Pilkington, *Follow the Rabbit-proof Fence* (1996) and Colin Johnson, *Wild Cat Falling* (1965).

Popular authors translated more than once in this decade include familiar names such as Morris West, Colleen McCullough and Nevil Shute, but also new entries appear for Linda Jaivin's 'chick lit' narratives, such as *Rock 'n' Roll Babes from Outer Space* (1996), John Birmingham's diaries/social commentaries, such as *He Died with a Felafel in his Hand* (1994), Greg Egan's science fiction titles, such as *Permutation City* (1994), and Matthew Reilly's *Ice Station* (2003) and *Temple* (1999). Other contemporary general fiction titles that became available in Italian translation in this decade included Gregory David Roberts' autobiographical *Shantaram* (2004), Nick Earls' Brisbane-based story *Perfect Skin* (2000), as well as the diaspora writings of Teo Hsu-ming, *Love and Vertigo* (2000) and Beth Yahp, *Crocodile Fury* (1992).

This overview of Australian texts translated into Italian raises some interesting questions for a sociological inquiry: e.g. the seeming arbitrariness that sees 'canonical' writers such as H.H. Richardson, Xavier Herbert or Thea Astley absent and prolific writers like Sumner Locke Elliott, Bryce Courtenay, Murray Bail or Helen Garner represented by 'one-off' inclusions.

A retrospective understanding of why some texts are chosen for translation and others overlooked in any given period is a complex task. This is due to the fact that the selection process is inevitably a factor of the social milieu of the times and reconstructing the particular

Zeitgeist is difficult because many ‘givens’ of the period were felt to be self-evident and in no further need of comment. As Bourdieu himself notes:

It is difficult to conceive the vast amount of information which is linked to membership of a field and which all contemporaries immediately invest in their reading of works: information about institutions – e.g. academies, journals, magazines, galleries, publishers etc. – and persons, their relationships, liaisons and quarrels. Information about the ideas and problems which are ‘in the air’ and circulate orally in gossip and rumour (314).

My discussion of titles translated per decade since 1945 – represented in Figure 1 below – gives some indication as to how agencies in Italy, both individuals and institutions, influenced the selection process of those titles which now form part of the archive of Australian texts in Italy.

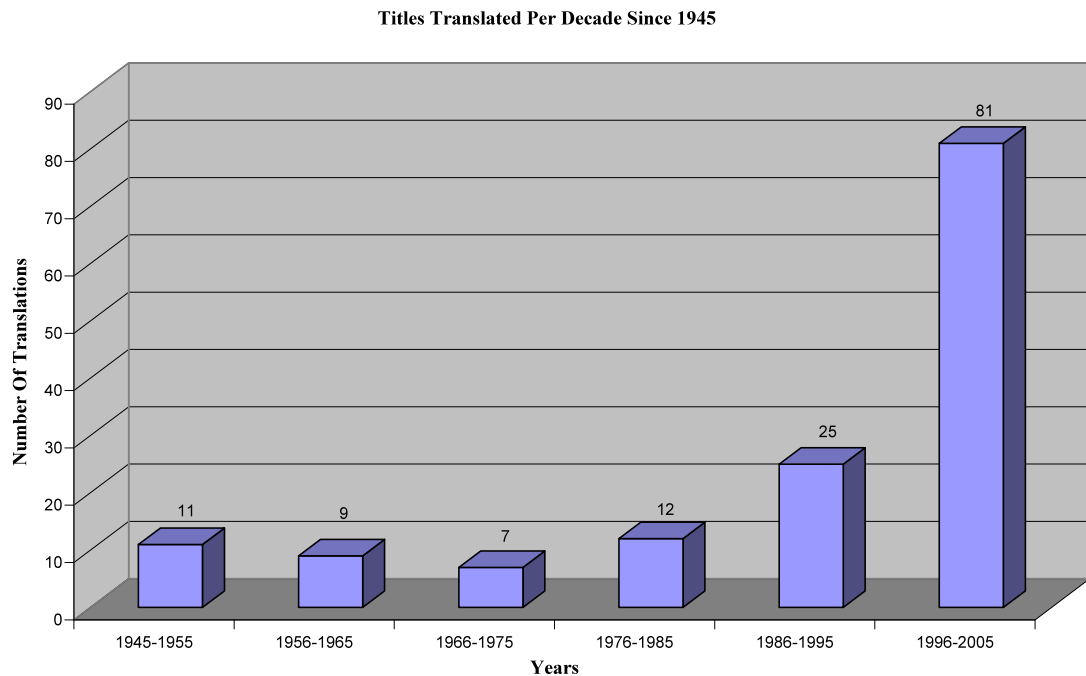


Figure 1: Titles translated per decade since 1945

This graph reveals that between 1945 and 1955, a period of political and social upheaval in Australia as represented in the socialist realist fiction of that time, only eleven Australian literary narratives were translated into Italian. Among some of the most significant names in literary production in this period were K.S. Prichard, Vance Palmer, Marjorie Barnard and Flora Eldershaw, Patrick White, Xavier Herbert, Eve Langley and Christina Stead, yet out of their work only White’s *The Aunt’s Story* (1948), Dark’s *The Sun Across the Sky* (1937), and Stead’s *Letty Fox: Her Luck* (1946) were translated into Italian. Overlooked for translation into Italian in this period was Frank Hardy’s first novel *Power without Glory* (1950) which, however, was translated into several languages of the Communist bloc including German, Hungarian, Czech, Romanian, Chinese and Russian. His 1959 novel, *The Four-legged Lottery*, was also translated into German and Russian. A similar trend is to be found in the works of K.S. Prichard which

were also popular with Eastern European publishers but found no market in Italy: *Black Opal* (1921) was translated into German in 1959 and *Working Bullocks* (1926) into Russian in 1928; *Coonardoo* (1928) was also translated into Russian in 1959 and Czech in 1960. While a number of Patrick White's works were translated for the Italian market during the last half of the twentieth century, *The Tree of Man* (1956) was a noteworthy exception. In 1957 it was however translated in Germany where, according to Russell West-Pavlov, White's genesis theme was adapted into a 'myth of new beginning in postwar Germany. The ideological objectives of the social and political "Stunde-null" [zero hour, caesura] which was announced in West Germany after 1945' were well served by White's text which constitute a 'direct literary "objective correlative"' (West-Pavlov 66). The reluctance of Italian publishers to commission translations of Australian social realist fiction compared to their counterparts in East European nations can be traced to ideological conflicts with Italy's new democratic institutions.

The graph also shows how between the 1970s and the 1980s the number of translations steadily increases and some of the fiction writers who play a key role in Australian literary studies such as Miles Franklin, Patrick White, Joan Lindsay and Christina Stead start to emerge. Many of the translations published in these years were translated well after the novels' original date of publication: for example, Stead's *The Man who Loved Children* (1940) was translated in 1978, while her novel *For Love Alone* (1944), Miles Franklin's *My Brilliant Career* (1901) and Joan Lindsay's *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1967) were all translated in 1983. The time lapses – an average of forty-five years – between the initial publication and Italian translation is noteworthy and indicative of new agencies moving to influence translation selection processes. I consider that much of the interest in recovering these titles into Italian can be traced to the academy.

Beginning in 1979 university departments from Florence to Venice began to focus their attention on Australian writing. This was the result of efforts by Professor Bernard Hickey, an Australian academic, and Italian academics such as Professor Claudio Gorlier who oversaw the introduction of courses in Australian Studies in universities like Ca' Foscari in Venice, l'Università degli Studi di Torino as well as l'Università di Lecce. The effect that academic interest in Australian narratives had on the composition of the archive of Australian fiction in Italian is best exemplified by the seven translations of Christina Stead's works. This number may seem of little relevance until it is compared with the frequency of Stead's translations into other European languages. Despite both France and the Federal Republic of Germany having a stronger tradition of translated literature than Italy, Stead has been translated only three times into each of French and German (as well as twice into Portuguese). The relatively disproportionate number of Stead translations in the Italian archive can be directly related to Gorlier's interest in her work and his setting of her narratives in his courses in Australian studies at Turin University.

Lawrence Venuti argues that the agency of the academy can be especially effective in determining the nature of literary translations because of the degree of institutional authority these agencies wield in the target culture. His 1995 study of the construction of a canon of modern Japanese fiction in America in the 1950s and 60s reveals a collection of translated texts that were quite unrepresentative of Japan in the post-war period. These texts had been selected and translated by American academics whose interests in Japan had been shaped by contact during World War II. As close collaborators of American publishers they fostered established

stereotypes among an American readership through the cultivation of a nostalgic longing for the pre-war past.

Translators and their individual predilections can also play a decisive role in the selection of a text for publication. The most dramatic example of translator agency in the shaping of the Australian literary archive in Italian is represented by Franca Cavagnoli, Italian writer, academic and the translator of David Malouf. She is also an external collaborator with publishers Frassinelli Editore who are the largest Italian publishers of Australian fiction, with writers such as Peter Carey, Richard Flanagan and David Malouf on their lists. A medium-sized firm, Frassinelli has published translations of seventeen Australian literary titles between 1945 and 2006. Of these, fifteen have been published since 1988 as a result of an ongoing project driven specifically by Cavagnoli and the women who have filled the role of Senior Editor of Foreign Fiction with this publisher since the 1990s (Formica 2010). Cavagnoli translated *Remembering Babylon* without a commissioning publisher and then approached Frassinelli to bring Malouf to their notice. In private email correspondence to me she wrote: 'I insisted that Frassinelli publish Malouf's books.' It was her admiration of David Malouf's narratives that led to the publication of five of Malouf's titles between 1998 and 2004 and the re-issue of *Una vita immaginaria* in 2001.

From the perspective of Bourdieu's field theory, many translations represent attempts by the publisher or the translator to transform the cultural capital accumulated either by the title or the author within the source culture into symbolic or economic capital in the receiving culture. The symbolic capital attached to international literary prizes is therefore another factor in the selection of titles for translation.

In 1973 Patrick White became the first and only Australian writer to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature and the capital attached to this most prestigious international prize might lead one to expect that all of White's literary *oeuvre* would have found its way into the Italian archive of Australian literary texts – but this is not the case. The translations of his works into Italian are *The Aunt's Story* (1952), *Voss* (1965), *The Solid Mandala* (1973), *The Eye of the Storm* (1974) and *Riders in the Chariot* (1976); *The Tree of Man*, *The Vivisector* and *Flaws in the Glass* are notable among those titles missing. Although difficult to confirm, it seems likely that the symbolic capital attached to the Nobel Award did not convert to financial capital in the market for the Italian publishers of White and thus no further translations of his titles were commissioned after the mid-seventies.

Literary prizes carry less weight when they are local to the source culture: recipients of the Miles Franklin award have only been selectively represented in translation and since its inauguration in 1957, only thirteen winners have been selected for translation in Italy. However, Peter Carey's *Oscar and Lucinda* not only won the Miles Franklin Award in 1986 but also in 1988 became the winner of the Booker Prize. It was translated into Italian in 1990 and *The Tax Inspector* (1991) followed in 1993. Carey's other Booker success, *True History of the Kelly Gang*, was also rapidly translated into Italian despite the significant linguistic difficulties it posed. All Carey's titles are now consistently translated, thanks both to the symbolic capital attached to his Booker Prize triumphs and the critical attention reserved for his work, not to mention, of course, the

cultural and symbolic capital accumulated by his international publishers (Faber & Faber in London and Knopf and Random House in New York).

The power of international publishers has been investigated recently by Heilbron 1999, Bourdieu 2008, Sapiro 2008 and Venuti 2008, with all studies emphasising that the selection of titles for translation is a decision that lies mainly with publishing houses and depends almost solely on their commercial or cultural strategies. A good Australian example of this is offered by *Julia Paradise*, the first novel of Rod Jones, which was published locally by McPhee Gribble in 1986 and picked up by the American house Simon & Schuster. According to Hilary McPhee, its subsequent translation into numerous European languages, including Italian, was due to the fact that ‘it had two highly respected literary publishers talking it up as a *brilliant debut* [original emphasis]’ (204). Offering a compelling insight into publishers’ role in the processes of selection and translation of titles for publication, where, according to Bourdieu, they act as ‘bank[s] of social and symbolic capital’ (2008, 125). McPhee writes: ‘Tom Maschler at Jonathan Cape and Jim Silberman at Summit (part of Simon & Schuster in New York) bought *Julia Paradise* and translation into a dozen languages flowed from the enthusiasm of these men and these imprints’ (204).

Although the selection of titles for translation will always be powerfully affected by the receiving culture, as indicated above, national governments in the source culture have also historically played a major role in the dissemination of literary capital because literary narrative ‘[t]hrough its essential link with language – itself always national, has invariably been appropriated by national authorities as a symbol of identity’ (Casanova 34). One of the initiatives implemented under the Keating Government’s *Creative Nation: Commonwealth Cultural Policy* was a Translation Program administered by the Australia Council Literature Board. This was designed to reflect the pluralist nature of Australian writing as well as ‘to focus attention on Australia as a centre for high-quality translation and publishing in translation’ (Australia Council 30). A six-year strategic plan was developed for the international marketing of Australian writing, providing subsidies to overseas publishers to assist with the translation and publication of the work of living Australian writers and focussing on ‘France, Germany [...] in 1995 and 1996 and on Italy [...] in 1997’ (29). Figure 2 below illustrates that between 1998 and 1999, i.e. in the period immediately following the Program’s specific targeting of the Italian market, the number of translations of literary narratives reached levels never achieved either before or subsequently. The substantial increase in Italian translations of literary titles in this period offers firm evidence of the important role played through government funding by national institutions in fostering the international archives of translations of Australian texts.

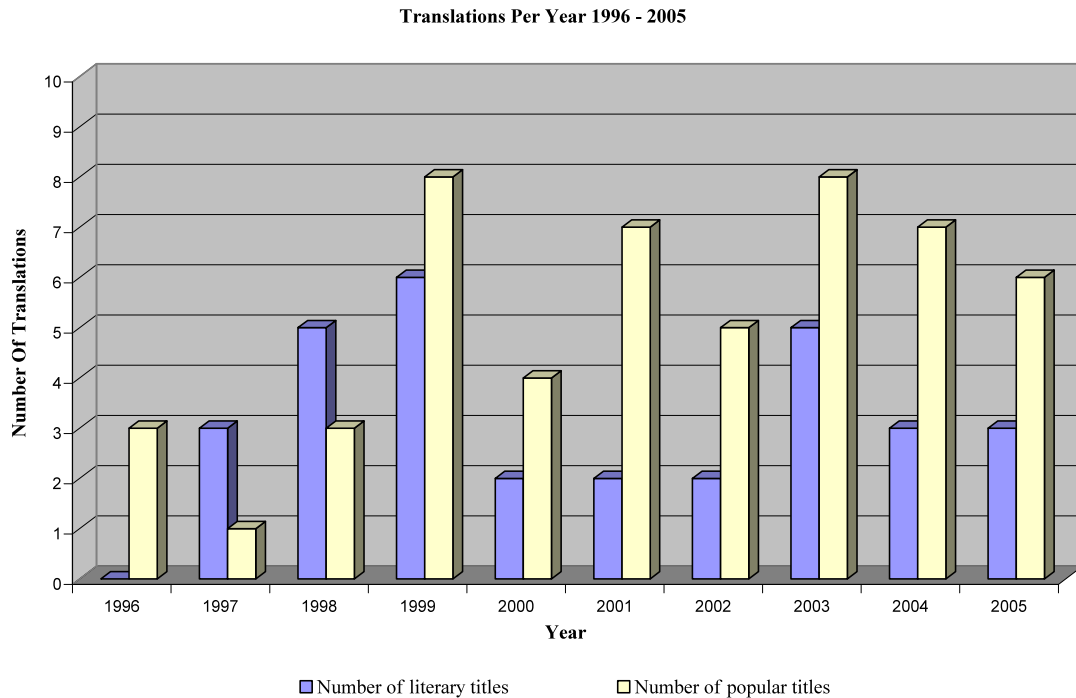


Figure 2: Translations of literary and popular titles per year 1996-2005

The Translation Program conceived along these lines came to an end in 2000. Other nations such as Great Britain, Canada and Israel continue to support such a pro-active translation program but in Australia questions of governance now limit the Literature Board's interventions. As it is currently structured, translation funding is made available through the Literature Board of the Australia Council to overseas publishers who, having secured translation rights to a title, then make an application for financial support towards their translation costs.

Currently the promotion of Australian literature to overseas publishers is the responsibility of the Marketing Strategies Division of the Australia Council. Besides taking Australian writing to the major international fairs in Bologna, London and Frankfurt, this body also organises the very successful Visiting International Publishers (VIP) program. In order to promote rights sales of Australian titles into overseas markets and to strengthen links between Australian and overseas publishing houses and literary agencies, the VIP program invites overseas publishers to Australian literary festivals in Adelaide and Sydney. Since its beginning, the VIP program has hosted 128 publishing representatives from Europe, the UK, USA, Canada, China, Japan, Korea, Israel, Brazil and India, with more than 300 Australian titles sold into overseas markets through the program. In both these government initiatives to promote Australian writing internationally the emphasis falls on attracting overseas publishers and lends further support to the power that international publishers exercise in the selection of titles for translation – and hence in the shaping of the Australian archive abroad.

Conclusions about what the Australian archive might represent in Italian culture are limited by the relatively small corpus and the diversification of the genres represented. While the heterogeneity might seem to indicate a lack of interest either on the part of commercial or

political institutions in developing a specifically Australian list or marketing strategies which would support the translation of Australian texts, such diversity can be considered fairly representative of the workings of the global contemporary book industry which typically publishes many titles as ‘catalogue fillers.’ Of course, this is less the case in the selection of literary titles, since this is the area in which the foreign editor identifies a cultural production that is flourishing and finds that ‘new voice’ which often motivates translation selections. Such a motivated recognition of the potential for a ‘foreign’ voice to generate cultural capital locally might lie behind the Italian publisher’s exceptionally rapid translation of *Seven Types of Ambiguity* by the emerging Australian author Elliot Perlman in 2006.

Research into the intercultural movement of texts indicates that the selection of a title for translation will sometimes be a reflection of its innovative nature, its capability to offer another culture a model to invigorate their national literary repertoire, as for example in the case of the adoption of Latin American ‘magical realism’ into English. On other occasions, a selection will reflect the symbolic capital of a particular author or a specific literary tradition and the commercial interests of publishers acting to implement their cultural and/or commercial corporate strategies. Perhaps more significantly, the selection process reflects the complexity of the relationship between translated literature as cultural artefact and commodity, of the interconnectedness between text and market. Patrick White’s *Voss*, Tim Winton’s *Dirt Music*, Murray Bail’s *Eucalyptus* and Sally Morgan’s *My Place* can all be seen as cultural products that are fulfilling Italian cultural expectations of what an Australian text should be like but they are also deliberate choices made by publishers on the basis of commercial criteria (see further on this in Formica 2010).

Gideon Toury states that ‘translations are facts of target-cultures; on occasions facts of a special status ... but of the target-culture in any event’ (29). The Italian archive of Australian texts demonstrates the inherent truth of this statement by both its overall heterogeneous nature and by the demonstrable role that various Italian socio-cultural agencies have had in its formation. There is really no reason why the situation should be different given that world literature circulates through translation, but, as Giselle Sapiro reminds us, ‘translation is not a disembodied activity but a social practice which depends on intermediary [agencies]’ (158).

NOTE

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